



United States Senator  
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REPORTS TO ALABAMA



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## A REPUBLICAN APPROACH TO THE ENVIRONMENT

Let's be clear, the debate over the environment is not about *whether* we should protect the environment, but rather *how*. It is a debate between those who adhere to a common sense, scientific-based, conservationist approach versus those who are determined to push a radical, out-of-touch, anti-human, anti-progress agenda. While we all want clean air, a safe water and food supply, and healthy green trees, we must develop a standard of scientifically-based, common sense with regard to environmental policy, rather than giving in to politically driven extremes.

Despite a 30 percent increase in population and economic progress, our nation has come a long way since the 1970s. Our air is cleaner, forests and wetlands are increasing, twice as many of our rivers are suitable for swimming and fishing, the presence of toxic emissions has declined, and recycling efforts are increasing. No doubt, the more than 20 years of Republican leadership at the White House made this important progress possible.

While the condition of our environment has improved, we must not become complacent about that progress. A thriving economy, and continued global population growth, requires nothing less than new ideas that are solidly ground in common sense and good science. We already have a solid foundation for what does and does not work well. We've learned that incentives, market mechanisms, cooperation, respect for private property, and local control are concepts that work well; while, federal control, one-size-fits-all programs, faulty or absent science, lack of respect for private property rights and human need, and the failure to consider unintended adverse risks (such as removing asbestos from schools which actually increased airborne asbestos), do not work well.

Those concepts that work well come naturally to Republicans, who are by very definition in favor of a smaller, less intrusive federal government, greater control at the local and state levels, and conservationism.

Evidence to support this fact is readily apparent.

During consideration of the Omnibus Appropriations Bill, I worked to include several important, but sometimes overlooked, proposals that provide environmental benefit to the people of Alabama. For example, I encouraged my colleagues to provide increased funding for research into improving our food supply, particularly for crops and species grown or raised in Alabama. I also provided funding for continued research into improving the efficiency and thus the environmental consideration of aspects of state and national transportation infrastructure.

As Chairman of the Senate Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee, I worked to not only promote efficiency through technology, but also to increase public transportation opportunities. I also encouraged the development of strategic concepts and proposals designed to alleviate congestion on our nation's roads; thus, reduced congestion diminishes the incidents of vehicle pollution. Additionally, our bill provided research funding for a new highway polymer designed to make our roads and highways last longer----a fact that will help reduce endless road repair, as well as reduce the frequency of highway component recycling.

Another environmental concern comes not from man-made pollutants, but from non-indigenous species, which can populate ports and waterways causing significant damage to the delicate balance of our water systems, lakes and rivers. Research is underway through the Transportation Appropriations bill into how best to address and combat the environmental problems caused by non-indigenous species.

While some may laugh at the title, poultry recycling, or research into the recycling or innovative disposal of chickens and other animals raised for human consumption, is another critical aspect of controlling waste that creates harmful bacterial contaminants in our food and water supply. Continued research to find in-

novative solutions to these environmentally challenging problems should be a critical component of any long-term environmental solution.

In the Interior portion of the Omnibus Bill, I worked to include important funding needed to continue Alabama's sturgeon conservation effort, as well as provided funding for the research and continued development of wetlands and other conservation efforts in our state and region.

Another important aspect of environmental protection and conservationism and that must not be overlooked is the importance of funding for education and research into the types of innovative solutions that have enabled us to address the environmental problems we faced in the 1960s. Each year, we work to find innovative ways to encourage public/private partnerships aimed at not only reducing the incidents of pollution, but finding new and innovative ways to deal with pollution. Certainly, the changing landscape of issues related to a changing world and thus a changing environment, require that we remain a step ahead in anticipating problems before they arise.

These are only a few of the important environmentally sound and common sense-based approaches to environmental protection and conservation that I support. Certainly, I continue looking forward to the day when we will be successful in overhauling the Endangered Species Act, as well as many other environmental policies that have long since ceased to be truly effective, scientifically sound, and based in common sense.

As we prepare to begin a new Congress, the 106th, I look forward to working toward new and better ways of addressing the environmental challenges of the 21st Century. One thing is certain: big government, overzealous bureaucrats, and individuals who fail to recognize and appreciate the human component of our increasing global society will not provide the type of grounded, individual solutions that we need to continue to address the changing demands of our world.